

2001-014-984

July 5, 2001

General Services Administration  
FAR Secretariat; (MVR)  
Attention: Ms. Laurie Duarte  
1800 F Street N.W., Room 4035  
Washington, D. C. 20405

Dear Ms. Duarte:

I am an educator and community oriented individual living in Bakersfield, California. I am writing for many of us in California that are outraged with the leverage organized labor has applied to the process for bidding on energy and community projects.

One might think that organized labor has become an environmental watchdog and that facade somehow helps to complete public and private sector projects within budget and on time; however, nothing can be further from the truth.

Project Labor Agreements (PLA) are more expensive to the taxpayer than a competitively bid project. PLAs require that only unionized workers can work on those projects. This leaves the family-owned, small, minority and female-owned businesses out of the process because the majority of them are open-shop contractors.

The unions use their political connections, especially in the environmental arenas, to extort the project planner and developers into signing PLAs in order to obtain important permits and licenses. Some communities like Fresno have come to their senses and chosen to deny the unions' demand to sign a PLA to build their new sports complex. Consequently, a backlash is rippling throughout the state, following Fresno's lead.

California Unions for Reliable Energy (C.U.R.E.), another form of a PLA, isn't a union organization; rather, it is a front for the unions. The actual office of C.U.R.E. is the law firm of in San Francisco. They specialize in environmental issues and litigation.

Locally, C.U.R.E. held a gun to the heads of the developers of our power plant projects. If the project developers don't sign *all three* of C.U.R.E.'s labor agreements, C.U.R.E. would inundate the California Energy Commission with volumes of objections and red herrings by playing the environment card. This type of underhanded tactic has recently penetrated the oil well permitting process, which delayed new well drilling efforts. Two local power plant projects were delayed because of these tactics and the delay resulted in the cancellation of one project.

Why don't the developers want to sign these union contracts? Most PLAs restrict the construction of the project to union contractors. C.U.R.E.'s agreements go two contracts further, adding that *all maintenance and operation* of the plants must be performed by union personnel, and in many cases, for a period of ten (10) years. What happened to our freedom of choice?

Additionally, there is not enough local union labor to staff these jobs. The historical pattern shows organized labor imports union workers outside of the Kern County area to staff these jobs. The money the "travelers" make goes back to their hometown economies. This will take work and revenues away from the local workforce

7/10

016 014-984

and sends the revenue out of Kern County. The same scenario occurs throughout the country.

These agreements eliminate fair and open competition; discriminate against small, woman and minority-owned businesses; and drive the cost of the projects up. You have a duty in this issue; don't allow these unfair labor practices to continue in our community and the country. Stop these extortionist processes now.

***Demand that all Federal, State and Private projects be bid in an open-competitive environment and be judged on merit and merit alone.***

Sincerely,



Thomas B. See  
2525 21st Street  
Bakersfield, CA 93301